



New York City Center Unveils Two Works By Deborah Kass

Learn more about 'Day After Day' and 'Being Alive' here!

By: Stephi Wild Feb. 22, 2024



New York City Center has unveiled two works by artist Deborah Kass as part of the 80th Season at the Center of the Arts. Free for audiences to experience when they attend a performance at City Center, *Day After Day* and *Being Alive* can be viewed in the Shuman Lounge and Orchestra Lobby through November 2024. The installation is a continuation of City Center's visual art exhibits which have featured works by Stephen Antonakos, Keith Haring, Arnold Newman, Jorge Otero-Pailos (commission), Nina Robinson (commission), Mark Seliger, Hiroshi Sugimoto, and Lawrence Weiner (commission), and the current installation of Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing #357* which can be viewed in the Grand Tier Lobby.

Deborah Kass (born 1952) is an American artist whose work explores American art, culture, and identity. Her early paintings mimic the styles of iconic male artists of the 20th century such as Andy Warhol, Ellsworth Kelly, and Frank Stella. Her use of appropriation is a commentary on the dominant position male artists have historically held. In more recent years, Kass has responded to the uncertain political and ecological climate by looking back on the 20th century with nostalgia.

Using the colorful, optimistic style of many artists of the recent past, Kass incorporates hopeful lyrics from Broadway, the Great American Song Book, pop music, film scores, and Yiddish tradition. Kass loves American musical theater and considers Stephen Sondheim the greatest Broadway composer and lyricist. “No one deals with the complexities of modern life the way Sondheim does—the alienation, irony—with so much compassion,” she says. “This is what you do when you’re an artist; you talk about the human condition.”

Day After Day (2010), a monumental seven-panel painting, is inspired by Sondheim’s lyrics in “Not a Day Goes By” from the musical *Merrily We Roll Along*. Stylistically it recalls the monochromatic paintings of Ellsworth Kelly, and the stenciled letters are a riff on Jasper Johns. It was made during the Obama administration when oil from a damaged BP rig was gushing into the Gulf of Mexico, day after day.

Day After Day, 2010

Oil and acrylic on canvas
6 x 21 feet

The text in *Being Alive* is taken from Sondheim’s musical *Company*. The print is based on a painting from a series of work called “feel good paintings for feel bad times” that Kass began following the contentious Presidential election in 2000, as well as the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001 and the resulting War on Terror. The exuberant colors and playfulness extend a feeling of optimism for life despite the anxiety of the times.

Being Alive, 2012

9-color silkscreen and color blend on 2-ply museum board
24 x 24 inches
edition of 65

Kass’s works can be found in the permanent collections of The Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Jewish Museum, the Whitney Museum of Art, and the Brooklyn Museum. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Support for Visual Art at New York City Center is provided by Deborah Goodman Davis and Gerald R. Davis.

New York City Center’s 80th Season at the Center of the Arts continues through June 23. Upcoming presentations include musical theater revivals of *Jelly’s Last Jam* (Feb 21 – Mar 3) and *Titanic* (Jun 11 – 23) as part of the 30th Encores! series, *Flamenco Festival* (Mar 8 – 17), *Nederlands Dans Theater* (Apr 3 – 6), and *Message In A Bottle* (Apr 30 – May 12). Tickets starting from \$45 (fees included) can be purchased online at NYCityCenter.org, by calling 212.581.1212, or in person at the City Center Box Office. Access City Center Club is available to those 35 years of age and under and offers a limited number of \$28 tickets (fees included) to City Center productions. For more information and to sign up, visit NYCityCenter.org/Access. New York City Center is located at 131 W 55th St between Sixth and Seventh avenues.

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